

GP CENTRE INFORMATION BULLETIN

PATIENTS – Personal Information - and how we use it.

This guide sets out the ways in which we handle information about you, and your rights in respect of that information

How do we use your personal information?

The main use of your personal information is to deliver and administer your healthcare and associated services. All healthcare professionals follow their professional codes of practice and the law. This means that they must make every effort to protect confidentiality. It also means that no identifiable information about you is passed to anyone or any agency without your express permission; except where this is essential for providing care or necessary to protect somebody's health, safety or well being.

The GP Centre:

- Is responsible for ensuring that everybody employed by the practice(s) understands the need for, and maintains, confidentiality.
- Has overall responsibility for ensuring that systems and mechanisms are in place to protect confidentiality.
- Has vicarious liability for the actions of those working in the practice – including health professionals and non clinical staff.

Your right to Access?

You have the right of access to information we hold about you on our records, full details the access procedure and fees are available from the reception desk.

Caring for your Data

Each G P Centre employee is personally responsible for maintaining patient confidentiality. We provide training and education to all our staff to remind them about their obligations. Our policies and procedures are audited and reviewed on a regular basis.

We further undertake that we will:

- Not hold information about you which is excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which it is processed.
- Keep any information about you accurate and where necessary up-to-date. To help us to do this please keep us informed of any changes to your details.
- Not keep data processed for any purpose or purposes longer than necessary.
- Process your information in accordance with your rights under the Data Protection Act.

Sharing Your Information

It is vital that the individuals' associated with patient care have ready access to the information that they need, it is also important that service users and their carers can trust their personal information will be kept confidential and that their privacy is respected.

There are also some statutory restrictions on the disclosure of information relating to some health conditions.

Our mechanisms for sharing information:

- Clinical meetings
- Face to face discussion
- Computer data
- Team meetings.
- Messaging

Defining purpose:

There are a number of justifiable purposes for sharing your information.

- Delivering personal care and treatment
- Assuring and improving that quality of care and treatment
- Monitoring and protecting public health
- Managing and planning services
- Risk management
- Investigating complaints
- Teaching and statistical analysis
- Research.

How we maintain Confidentiality and Records

- Each staff member is assigned with their own unique access to our computer systems; this allows access to the level of information commensurate with their position.
- Other Primary Care Health Team members only have access to manual/computer records with the informed consent of the doctor.
- When temporary contactors are engaged they are required to sign a confidentiality agreement; and they are only given restricted access in order to carry out their duties.
- We ensure that any reporting for statistical analysis carried out by the health authority is conducted in such a way anonymity of the patient is protected.
- We will not send copies of your medical records to solicitors, insurance companies etc without your written consent; and when copies are produced they are sent by recorded mail.

- When medical records move between practices a secure internal courier service is used.
- Electronic confidentiality is maintained; all records are password protected to limit unauthorised access:
 - The practice will take all reasonable care to protect both the physical security of information technology and the data contained within it.
 - The practice will further ensure they address the issues of security of information.

Telephone Calls:

We may record telephone conversations to offer you additional security, resolve complaints and improve our service standards. Conversations may also be monitored for staff training purposes.

You may be requested to provide personal information to verify your identity when telephoning the practice.

Who is the Data Controller?

The Data Controller is the **G P Centre** whose principal office is 322 Malden Road, SM3 8EP.

The Information Commissioner

If you wish to know more about your rights in respect of protection of personal data you should write to the: **Information Commissioner's Office.**

Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire SK9 5AF, or telephone 01625 545700. Homepage www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

If you have any concerns about how your data is used please write to the Practice Manager, Judith Hartland c/o The G P Centre.

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